

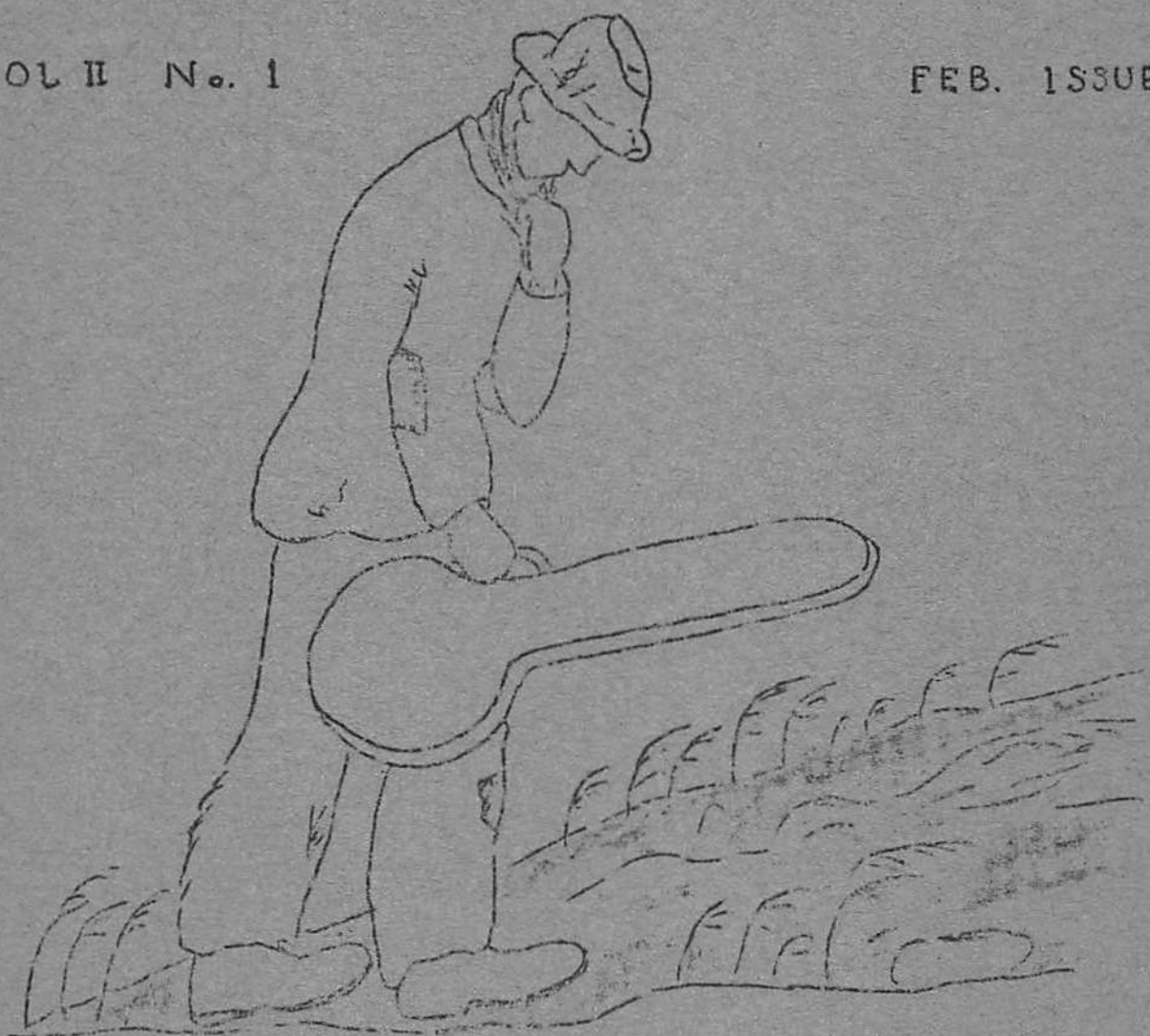
*Journal Mt. Vernon
Brown Jug Square*

PRYMEWAVE

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN FOLK LORE

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AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE GROUP

MARGOT MAYO

LEADER

"PROMENADE"



EDITORIAL STAFF

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Official organ of the American Square Dance Group.
"The purposes of the American Square Dance Group shall be to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, drama and general Americana which together comprise American folk culture; to conduct such activities without regard for race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with all who entertain similar views."

A.S.D.G. Constitution

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CITY FOLK GROUPS

Since receiving Mrs. Sonkin's contribution for this issue of "Promenade", we have had the opportunity to attempt, at least, to combine some of the "ingredients" of which she speaks. For since we are searching for new headquarters for the Group, and since we agree so thoroughly for a proper hall for square dancing, we have kept her article well in mind.

But it is one thing to criticize and suggest; it is quite another matter to convert such ideas into realities. In a large city, such as New York, space is at a premium, and it is difficult to locate just the right size room, with just the proper ventilation, with fire escapes which meet the requirements of the Fire Department, with convenient transportation facilities nearby, with sturdy floors and space to really swing your partner -- even if money is no object!

Folks who have grown up in the country, or who have visited country square dances (and, of these, but few live up to Mrs. Sonkin's rules!) are apt to overlook the problems of a city group. They are apt simply to demand the most ideal conditions and expect to have their wishes fulfilled---just like that!

Now, take the problem of a caller! There are few actual old-time callers available in New York City. True, there must be some around, but where? Then, too, an old-time caller is too frequently just that...a caller. And, for city-folks, who haven't lived in one neighborhood all their lives and danced the squares and longways since early childhood, Such folks need a teacher as well as a caller, in other words, a leader. I'm sure the folks in the country wouldn't know what a "leader" is; a caller, yes; a prompter, yes. Take a city crowd, people who frequently are strangers, even to themselves, gents who do not know on which side of their partners to stand, who never heard of a "corner lady" or a "grand right and left", people who think that square dancing and clowning are synonymous...these are some of the problems that confront a city caller.

CITY FOLK GROUPS - 2

The next thing that people suggest is a band! Or an old-time fiddler! A band that knows the tunes correctly and can really play for square dancing would have to be imported from the country, and most city groups can't afford that. The same thing holds for old-time fiddlers. Now somewhere, among the thousands of souls here in New York, there must be old-time fiddlers! But where, and, again, how much?



Let me sum up our situation, that is, the problems of those of us who believe that folk culture can be important in the lives of city dwellers, that it can fulfill the same need for city folk as for our neighbors in the country.

Take our Group:

1. We are, most of us, born and bred in the city, never attending a square dance, never even hearing of them until we were quite grown up. Yet our Group has become the outstanding thing in our lives. We read, study, dance, sing and breathe folk culture! It has taken the place of parties, of social functions of all kinds. It has

been the means of making new friends and finding new interests. It has given us a close communal spirit. That's one reason why we need new headquarters of our own, a place in which we can gather whenever we feel like it. That's why we won't just rent a hall and hold an open house occasionally.

2. The members of our Group come not only from all parts of this area (some of us travel thirty miles to rehearsals), but we come from different backgrounds, social, economic, cultural. All this means one more problem in the city group than isn't found out in the country. As a city group, we are an amalgam rather than an "ethnic oneness". And this ethnic dis-similarity of our backgrounds is quite proper in an American group. Our Group is, in a sense, America "writ small"!



3. A city group goes it alone! Here in the city, a group survives without the support of the Aldermen and Mayor. As a prize illustration, look at the groups, country groups, that travel long and expensive distances to one festival after another. In the program notes of such festivals, you will see that such-and-such a group is sponsored by the merchants of Denver, by the Lions Club of Martinsburg, by the XYZ Society of ABC. All this is fine -- but the city group does without it, and that means a financial problem on top of all the rest! The "Pepperell Prancers" may be supported by the Farmers Federation and use the Town Hall, but it will be long before the Fifth Avenue Merchants Association prevails on Mayor LaGuardia to let us use the City Hall for Open House!

RECIPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL SATURDAY NIGHT DANCE

(Nelson, N. H. Style)

by

ELLA SONKIN

Take a CALLER! The Ralph Page variety is one of the best on the market. Be sure he has a sense of humor, an even disposition, a real love for dancing and dancers, and above all else, a home-grown ability to call!

Place the caller in a well-ventilated Town Hall. (Note: if the hall is too small, speak gently but firmly to the selectmen.) If you believe that two objects can occupy the same place at the same time, remember that legend has been exploded.

Add a well-balanced mixture of old-timers and "jitterbugs", and sprinkle generously with city-bred visitors, experienced and otherwise. Disregard age, weight, or height of dancers, but insist on a youthful spirit.

Omit snobbishness, and include a large measure of neighborliness.

Stir in an orchestra, which has a sense of rhythm, and a desire to cooperate with the caller. (If you can find a fiddler who is proud of his fiddle, and doesn't want to call it a "violin" - why, you're mighty lucky.)

Divide the evening into about fifteen sections. Concentrate on "contrys" and sprinkle lightly with a few quadrilles. Spread evenly throughout the evening. Toast with many unexpected calls and sequences, designed especially to take the conceit out of the experts. Season with a slow and fast waltz, and add variety with a heel and toe polka. Use benches only when absolutely necessary.

For real gourmets, include Pat'nella, Lady Walpole's Reel, Morning Star, Hull's Victory, and Lady of the Lake.

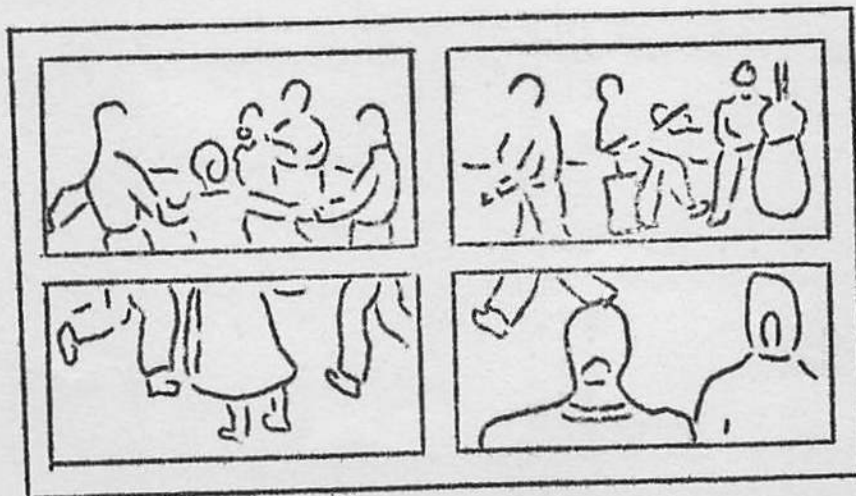
Stir the dancers almost continuously from nine to twelve o'clock, and take twenty minutes for intermission and unimportant "drinks". Allow the mixture to increase in size, by adding generous portions of authenticity and regard for the caller.

Cook with no regard for the temperature, and allow the perspiration to flow freely. Remember that dances have dignity and beauty, and should be kept in their springy form. The dancing is much slower than the tempo established by the city slickers from New York.

Allow the mixture to rise, until it reaches a climax at midnight, with Darling Nelly Gray, followed by the inevitable last waltz.

Garnish with large pieces of genuine fun, with a strong dash of consideration for beginners, and fancy steps to suit the taste of old-timers.

Serve every Saturday night!!!





VITA RUDIKOFF
JUNIOR DIVISION
A.S.D.E

An impression of Margot !!!

AUNT LENA

by

Charlotte Parker
High Point, N.C.

Down in Carolina, all lumped in one county, I have a big collection of relatives. And since, down here, some of the same families have been farming for ten generations, I'm "kin" to most of them.

My great-aunt Lena lives in a central county of North Carolina, and she always was the tune-playing one in the family. She's short and plump and she wears her hair pulled up over her head. She has a quick nervous step and she's always busy as a bee.



If one of the maiden ladies in "Arsonic and Old Lace" had a Southern accent and a little more obvious acid in her disposition, she'd be Aunt Lena to a T.

Aunt Lena couldn't understand why I wanted to write down the songs that she sang to the children on summer nights. "Why do you want these old songs?" she sniffed when I chased her away from hordes of relatives at a family Christmas dinner. Nevertheless, she was secretly very pleased. We both

settled down in the bedroom and she began in a high quavering voice as she accompanied herself on the peeled-off keys of the old square mahogany piano. The piano's dull staccato tones sounded well with her voice -- even though some of the keys were stuck and the pedals didn't always work! Aunt Lena began with the song for which we used to beg -- "There Was an Old Woman All Skin and Bones". This was Aunt Lena's specialty; nieces and nephews had squirmed with pleasure when she sang it.

1.

There was an old woman
All skin and bones
And she was full
Of sobs and moans
Um----mhm----hm.

2.

She thought she'd go
To church one day
To hear the parson
Preach and pray.
Um----mhm----hm.

3.

And as she got
Into the road,
She thought she stop
And rest her load.
Um----mhm----hm.

4.

And as she got
To the Church Door,
She thought she'd stop
And rest once more.
Um----mhm----hm.

5.

And as she turned
And looked around
She saw a corpse
Lying on the ground.
Um----mhm----hm.

6.

And out his eyes
And nose and mouth
The worms were crawling
In and out.
Um----mhm----hm.

7.

The woman to
The Parson said,
Will I look so
When I am dead?
Um----mhm----hm.

8.

The Parson to
The woman said,
Yes you'll look so
When you are dead.
Um----mhm----hm.

DIALS AND DISCS

Sunday	11:30 A.M.	WNYC	Prof. Mitchell and Consort
	1:30 P.M.	WJZ	Joseph Marais
Monday	11:15 P.M.	WABC	Golden Gate Quartet Burl Ives
Tuesday	9:15 A.M.	WABC	Wellsprings of Music
	4:30 P.M.	WNYC	Adventures in Music
Thursday	9:15 A.M.	WABC	Burl Ives
	1:15 P.M.	WNYC	"Leadbelly"
Friday	9:15 A.M.	WABC	Burl Ives
	3:30 P.M.	WQXR	American Concert
Saturday	9:15 A.M.	WABC	Burl Ives
	2:00 P.M.	WABC	Brush Creek Follies

Apropos of folk radio programs, the American Square Dance Group presented its folk contribution on the WNYC Folk Festival series in a half hour of music, square dances, songs and fiddle tunes.

Unfortunately John Allison and Margot could not be with us on the program as originally planned, but with Pete Seeger filling in on the banjo and lyrics, Aileen Mayo doing a splendid job of fiddling and Lucy Allison singing some quaint American ballads, we didn't need much more for a solid thirty minutes of folk fun !!

The last program of the "Back Where I Come From" series sounded a sad note for those interested in authentic American Folk programs. This enlightening series of musical sketches of Americana featured Woody Guthrie, Burl Ives, the Golden Gate Quartet, Earl Robinson, Pete Seeger, Joshua White and many other folk artists.

Members of the American Square Dance Group have written in requesting the continuation of this series. We hope others interested in American folk culture will take the initiative to do the same.

The American School of the Air series on the Columbia Broadcasting System (WABC) is presenting "Wellsprings of Music" every Tuesday morning at 9:15 A.M. These programs are under the direction of Alan Lomax of the Library of Congress and present American folk music as an integral part of man's day-to-day living.

This next month, "Wellsprings of Music" will present four half hour programs, each dedicated to a single phase in American life. The schedule for March is:

March	4th		Negro Work Songs
	11th		Work Rhythms and Marches
	18th		Sailor Songs
	25th		Songs of the Sea

DISCS

The number of records made by Frank Luther and Zora Layman, assisted by various combinations of voices and instruments, is amazing to say the least.

Here is a small list of just those albums which are in the collection of the American Square Dance Group: (All these are, of course, Decca releases)

- Album #48 More Songs of the Gay Nineties
- " #120.... Take Me Out to the Ball Game
- #25 American Folk Songs
- #46 Songs of the North in the War between the States
- #45 Songs of the South (same war!)
- #47 Songs of Old New York (1650-1906)
- #49 Songs of Old California

When you consider that there are some one hundred and sixty-six songs in these seven albums, unless I lost count somewhere, and that these songs cover almost the entire history of the New World since it was settled by the white man, you can't help but feel a little flabbergasted.

course, has nothing
ous recordings that
other songs, such as
popular songs!

Naturally some
better than others,
presented than
been reviewed in an
enade", so we'll con-
giving you an idea of
The Songs of the North
South are by far the



And all this, of
to do with the numer-
Mr. Luther has made of
children's songs and

of these albums are
and some songs better
others. Album #25 has
earlier issue of "Prom-
tent ourselves with
the remaining six.
and the Songs of the
most deserving of

praise with the Songs of Old California next on the list of favorites.

In each album there are songs which are really beautifully presented -- simple, straightforward and folky. For teachers in search of material for classroom presentation, these albums will prove their worth. But here again as in the case of the earlier re-

viewed American Folk songs, we must make the criticism of too far and too thin. The crowding of so many songs onto the same disc with the consequent necessity for the frequent and abrupt changes of mood, gives one an acute case of jitters. Yet we always feel that we must temper any unfavorable criticism of Frank Luther's recordings with the decided comment that he is doing a good piece of work in making available his numerous songs to so wide a public.



NOTES OF INTEREST

The American Music festival sponsored by station WNYC has been having some swell programs on folk music and folk dancing. Miss Yurchenco, who is in charge of folk programs, invited several folk artists to participate such as Burl Ives, Huddie "Leadbelly", Aunt Molly Jackson, Peter Seeger, and many others. We took part in this festival on Feb. 13th, having a half hour to ourselves. We had a wonderful time doing it too and we're glad that someone thinks we've got something. Lucy Allison and Billy Agnew helped us out in a few numbers and Pete Seeger was in town to be with us. Thanks Miss Yurchenco !!

John and Lucy Allison organized a square dance group in Englewood, N.J., and have asked us to conduct the Friday evenings of dancing. We're grateful to them for helping to spread the spirit of folk dancing. They're a swell group too !!

Two members of the A.S.D.G. have migrated to Washington and are organizing a new branch of the Group. A member of the Central Group went down to play for their first open house party and a batch of Juniors who were there for the Youth Congress demonstrated and helped teach the dances. The new Group met the following night. They had had a preliminary meeting to get acquainted with square dancing and now they are really beginning to organize. One of the members is learning to accompany on the piano, but meanwhile they must use records and their repertoire is limited because of the lack of tunes.

Despite this minor handicap, everyone who came to the rehearsal seemed to have a good time, and ten members have already started the membership rolling. The Group will be limited for a while, at least, to twenty-five people. As soon as they are a well knit group and know a few dances, they will, like the Central Group, start having open house parties. They will also go to neighboring communities to learn new dances, and will be able to exchange authentic material with us in New York.

It looks like a swell Group; they'll probably contribute a lot of material for 'Promenade' once they are started. Good luck Washington Group !!

The 8th Annual Folk Festival is coming along soon. In fact, on May 1st, 2nd and 3rd, at Constitution Hall in Washington D.C., a complete program of traditional songs and dances is planned for this national event with several hundred performers participating.

The Golden Gate Quartette was so good at the Inauguration Ball that they were asked to come down again. The occasion this time being the President's dinner for the Army and Navy officials.

Another friend of the Group, Joseph Marais, appeared on WMCA on the Friendship Bridge to Britain program, Feb. 19th, at the direct request of the government of the Union of South Africa !!

Dear Readers:

This letter is both a supplication and an explanation, and though I intensely dislike letter writing, I feel that I owe you an apology for our tardiness in getting out the February "Promenade".

You see, I played a dirty trick on "Promenade" and on the American Square Dance Group this month by retiring from folk activities to enjoy a good case of pneumonia.

The "Promenade" Committee struggled valiently to get the February Issue together, but I'm afraid that my "shorthand" and notes are rather difficult for others to decipher. And then too, Alan became entangled in his new job and could devote very little time to "Promenade".

Therefore the Juniors came to the rescue and did their level best to save the situation. And we are very grateful to them for they had to work under untold difficulties. The page, "Notes of Interest" was written entirely by Juniors, and the full page illustration was drawn by a Junior. Other Juniors took charge of the mimeographing, stapling, addressing and stamping the envelopes.

I sincerely hope you will forgive us if we have made any typographical errors or omitted important folk news and that you will understand the problems faced by the "publishers" this month.

We promise not to let it happen again! And it will certainly be a long time before the editor-in-chief will allow herself the privilege of a sojourn in the hospital. (Incidentally, the staff Doctor came from Texas and recalled for me a few square dance figures. He told me that one of the most popular dances "down home" is the "Put Your Little Foot Down" (Varsovianna). And there was a patient, a wonderful negro woman from Virginia, who recited ancient ballads to cheer us up.)

But enough of all this !!! Let's get on with the March issue!!

Many thanks for your patience,

Margot